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Letter dated 26 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, I have the honour to address you in your capacity as President of the United Nations Security Council for the month of September concerning the discussion of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, held by the Council today.

Once again, the Security Council refused a legitimate request from the Non-Aligned Movement to participate in the deliberations of this body, thereby preventing the Movement from expressing its views and making proposals. I reiterate that the Non-Aligned Movement is made up of 118 States, including the overwhelming majority of Middle Eastern States.

The decision taken by the Security Council is yet another example of its customary lack of transparency and provides further confirmation of the need for an urgent, thorough reform of that body, including its methods of work.

We are well aware that most of the Security Council's members, including the non-aligned countries among them, have always supported the legitimate right of the Non-Aligned Movement to explain its positions to the Security Council when issues of great relevance to the Movement, as in this case, are being discussed.

The opposition of certain members of the Council to allowing our views and proposals to be duly heard is, therefore, regrettable.

I would appreciate it if you would have the text of this letter and the annex thereto, which contains the statement that Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, had planned to make at today's meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

Accept, Sir, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca Díaz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Cuba
Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement

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Annex to the letter dated 26 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Spanish/English]

Statement by Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, at the meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

26 September 2008

I have the honour to address this meeting on behalf of the 118 member States of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Non-Aligned Movement considers both very timely and necessary the convening of this special meeting of the Security Council to consider the expanding illegal settlement activities being carried out by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Israel, the occupying Power, is continuing its campaign of planting illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in and around occupied East Jerusalem, in flagrant violation of international law, and in particular of the Fourth Geneva Convention, in violation of numerous resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly, and in defiance of the advisory opinion handed down on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice and the will of the international community.

More recently, Israel has even increased the scale of these illegal activities, despite the commitments given in the context of the Middle East peace process and the agreements reached within that framework.

Over the past few months, Israel has invited tenders for the construction of thousands of new housing units in Israeli settlements throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and continues to establish and expand its illegal settlements, building bypass roads to service these settlements and maintaining settlement outposts.

At the same time, the occupying Power continues its illegal construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including within East Jerusalem and surrounding areas. The construction of the wall is closely linked to the colonial settlement activities and serves, among other things, to further consolidate these settlements and to facilitate their expansion and the attempts to annex more Palestinian land.

Israel continues to implement countless other unlawful policies and measures to advance its campaign of illegal settlements and to alter the demographic composition, character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the confiscation of Palestinian lands, destruction of property, demolition of Palestinian homes and razing of agricultural lands, as well as the imposition of strict and discriminatory residency restrictions and a permit regime.

Such actions not only constitute grave and flagrant violations of international law but also inflame tensions, further destabilize the fragile situation on the ground and very negatively impact the peace process in which the two parties are engaged. Indeed, these illegal Israeli policies and activities are destroying the territorial contiguity, integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, seriously undermining the prospects for the creation of a physically viable and contiguous Palestinian State and thereby threatening the prospects for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in which a two-State solution is reached on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

The members of the Non-Aligned Movement reiterate their condemnation of all the illegal settlement activities being carried out by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and stress the dangers of these illegal and unilateral measures being taken by Israel. In this regard, the members of the Non-Aligned Movement urge the Security Council to seriously address this critical issue, considering its authority under the Charter of the United Nations and its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Security Council has in the past taken firm and clear positions deploring the settlement activities of Israel and calling for an end to the construction of settlements and the dismantling of settlements already constructed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

In view of the serious situation on the ground and the critical status of the peace process, it is incumbent on the Council to once again clearly and seriously address this issue by demanding respect for international law, including international humanitarian law and respect for all pertinent resolutions of the Council, and by reiterating its demand for Israel to put an immediate and complete end to all its activities for the construction, expansion and planning of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.